

## CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A multimedia apparatus configured for use in a home entertainment system, said  
5 apparatus comprising:
  - a data communications link configured to receive a software program via a network;
  - a processing device configured to identify the software program received by the data  
communications link and to determine whether said software program needs to be installed or  
has already been installed, and if it needs to be installed, to determine whether installation  
10 information relating to the software program is available to the processing device, said  
processing device further being configured to begin playing the software program if it has  
already been installed or to automatically initialize an installation of the software program prior  
to playing the software program if the installation information is available; and
  - an output means for providing audio and image data resulting from playing of the  
15 software program to the home system.
2. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the network comprises the Internet.
3. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, further comprising a database containing  
installation information relating to software programs identifiable for playing by the multimedia  
apparatus, wherein the processing device is configured to determine whether installation  
20 information relating to the software program being read by the reading means is available to the  
processing device by looking up the database.
4. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 3, wherein the database includes an installation  
status table containing installation information for particular software programs identifiable by  
the multimedia apparatus.
- 25 5. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the processing device is configured to  
identify said software program by deriving a unique identifier from unique elements intrinsic to  
said software program.

6. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 5, wherein the processing device is further configured to match said unique identifier to the installation information in the database.
7. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 5, wherein the processing device is further configured to derive said unique identifier by computing a hash function derived from a file allocation table of the portable recording medium.
8. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the processing device is configured to be backward compatible to play those software programs that are formatted to be executed on at least one personal computer platform without requiring prior modification to such software programs.
9. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 8, wherein the processing device is compatible with an operating system selected from the group consisting of DOS, Linux, Mac OS, and Windows.
10. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the processing device is configured to identify the software program independent of external networks.
11. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the output means is configured to provide the image data in a format compatible for display by a television monitor in the home entertainment system.
12. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, wherein the processing device is configured to perform personal computer tasks and the output means is configured to provide the image data in a format that does not require a computer monitor.
13. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 1, further comprising a circuit configured to read an instruction set stored in a header area of the CD-ROM/DVD, the instruction set facilitating automatic installation of the software program.
14. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the software program comprises a game.
15. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the instruction set comprises a script.

16. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 13, wherein the instruction set comprises an installation script.

17. A home entertainment system comprising:

an input for receiving user commands;

a display for presentation of image data;

an audio circuit for presentation of audio data;

one or more audio or video components for playing audio or video recordings; and

a multimedia apparatus having capability of playing software programs, comprising:

a data communications link configured to receive a software program via a network;

a processing device configured to identify the software program received by the data communications link and to determine whether said software program needs to be installed or has already been installed, and if it needs to be installed, to determine whether installation information relating to the software program is available to the processing device, said processing device further being configured to begin playing the software program if it has already been installed or to automatically initialize an installation of the software program prior to playing the software program if the installation information is available; and

an output means for providing audio and image data resulting from the playing of the software program to the audio means and the display means.

18. The home entertainment system as in claim 17, wherein network comprises the Internet.

19. The home entertainment system as in claim 17, further comprising a database containing installation information relating to particular software programs identifiable for playing by the multimedia apparatus, wherein the processing device is configured to determine whether installation information relating to the software program being read by the reading means is available to the processing device by looking up the database.

20. The home entertainment system as in claim 19, wherein the database includes an installation status table containing installation information for particular software programs identifiable by the multimedia apparatus.

21. The home entertainment system as in claim 17, wherein the processing device is configured to identify said software program by deriving a unique identifier from unique elements intrinsic to said software program.
22. The home entertainment system as in claim 21, wherein the processing device is further  
5 configured to match said unique identifier to the installation information in the database.
23. The home entertainment system as in claim 21, wherein the processing device is further configured to derive said unique identifier by computing a hash function derived from a file allocation table of the portable recording medium.
24. The home entertainment system as in claim 21, wherein the processing device is  
10 configured to be backward compatible to play those software programs that are formatted to be executed on at least one personal computer platform without requiring prior modification to such software programs.
25. The home entertainment system as in claim 24, wherein the processing device is  
15 compatible with an operating system selected from the group consisting of DOS, Linux, Mac OS, or Windows.
26. The home entertainment system as in claim 17, wherein the processing device operates independent of external networks.
27. The home entertainment system as in claim 17, wherein the output means is configured to provide the image data in a format compatible for display by a television monitor in the home  
20 entertainment system.
28. The home entertainment system as in claim 17, wherein the processing device is configured to perform personal computer tasks and the output means is configured to provide the image data in a format that does not require a computer monitor.
29. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 17, further comprising a circuit configured to read  
25 an instruction set stored in a title area of the CD-ROM/DVD, the instruction set facilitating automatic installation of the software program.

30. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 29, wherein the software program comprises a game.

31. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 29, wherein the instruction set comprises a script.

32. The multimedia apparatus as in claim 29, wherein the instruction set comprises an  
5 installation script.

33. A method of executing a software program in a home entertainment system, said method comprising:

providing a data communications link configured to receive software program from a network;

10 identifying the software program being read by the reading means;

determining whether the software program needs to be installed or has already been installed, and should it need to be installed, whether installation information relating to the software program being read by the reading means is available to be used to perform an automatic installation of the software program;

15 beginning the playing of the software program if it has already been installed or automatically initializing an installation of the software program prior to executing the software program if the installation is available; and

providing audio and image data resulting from the playing of the software program to the home entertainment system.

20 34. The method as in claim 33, wherein the network comprises the Internet.

35. The method as in claim 33, wherein the act of determining comprises the acts of:  
storing in a database installation information relating to particular software programs identifiable for playing; and

25 looking up the database to determine whether installation information relating to the software program is contained in the database.

36. The method as in claim 35, wherein the database includes an installation status table containing installation information for particular software programs.

37. The method as in claim 33, wherein the identifying act comprises the act of deriving a unique identifier from unique elements intrinsic to said software program.
38. The method as in claim 37, wherein the software program is identified by matching said unique identifier to the installation information in the database.
- 5 39. The method as in claim 37, wherein the unique identifier of the software program is derived by computing a hash function derived from a file allocation table of the portable recording medium.
40. The method as in claim 33, wherein the playing act is performed by a processing device which is configured and structured to be backward compatible to play those software programs  
10 that are formatted to be executed on at least one personal computer platform without requiring prior modification to such software programs.
41. The method as in claim 40, wherein the processing device is compatible with an operating system selected from the group consisting of DOS, Linux, Mac OS, or Windows.
42. The method as in claim 41, wherein the determination act is independent of external  
15 networks.
43. The method as in claim 41, wherein the image data provided is configured in a format compatible for display by a television monitor in the home entertainment system.
44. The method as in claim 41, further comprises the act of configuring to perform personal computer tasks and the image data is provided in a format that does not require a computer  
20 monitor.
45. A method for automatically installing a software program from a CD-ROM/DVD comprising storing an instruction set in a header information area of the CD-ROM/DVD, the instruction set facilitating automatic installation of the software program.
46. The method as recited in claim 45, wherein the software program comprises a game.
- 25 47. The method as recited in claim 45, wherein the instruction set comprises a script.

48. The method as recited in claim 45, wherein the instruction set comprises an installation script.

49. A computer readable medium comprising:

a header information area;

5 a data area;

a software program stored in the data area; and

an instruction set stored in the header information area for facilitating installation of the software program.

50. The computer readable medium as recited in claim 49, wherein the software program  
10 comprises a game.

51. The computer readable medium as recited in claim 49, wherein the instruction set comprises a script.

52. The computer readable medium as recited in claim 49, wherein the instruction set comprises an installation script.

15 53. The computer readable medium as recited in claim 49, wherein the computer readable medium comprises a CD-ROM.

54. The computer readable medium as recited in claim 49, wherein the computer readable medium comprises a DVD.

55. A method for installing a software program, the method comprising:

20 defining a known computer system for executing the software program, the known computer system at least partially defining a known installation procedure for the known computer system; and

providing a script defined at least in part by the known installation procedure.

56. A method for installing a software program, the method comprising:

25 providing a database that contains installation information;

updating the database via at least one of a network and portable media; and

using the installation information to perform an installation of the software program.

57. The method as recited in claim 56, wherein the database contains at least one installation script.

58. The method as recited in claim 56, wherein the database contains a plurality of installation scripts for a plurality of software programs.

5 59. A method for installing a software program, the method comprising using a script to at least partially install the software program without identifying the software program.

60. A method for installing a software program, the method comprising:  
providing the software program via a network;  
providing installation information in a header of a data transmission of the software

10 program; and

using the installation information to install the software program.